

Salaries Act

Mr. Stanfield: As far as the bill for lieutenant governors is concerned, I am prepared to see it go to committee. There has not been an increase since 1963. Whether the sum of \$35,000 should be contemplated is another matter, but I have no hesitation in supporting sending the bill to committee. By so doing I do not pretend for one moment that we are doing a systematic job, or bringing anything like comprehensive justice to the people of Canada. Frankly I do not see any sign of determination in this House or in the country for bringing about such justice. My hon. friends to my left speak about restraint. I should like to see them support some program of restraint and express to the House what it is. I fought hard for a program of restraint, and I am still prepared to do so.

All kinds of anomalies and injustices are increasing from day to day and from month to month because of what has been going on. The longer we have rates of inflation of 8 per cent, 10 per cent or 12 per cent a year, the more the injustice will increase and the greater will be the disparity between the relatively poor and the relatively well-to-do. If inflation continues, certainly the injustice which will be inflicted on society will increase. But we will not create justice for the relatively poor and hard pressed who are suffering from inflation by taking it out on the judges or the lieutenant governors. Let the committee determine what is appropriate. We can amend the bills when they come back, for that matter.

If we are going to attack inflation, let us attack inflation; let us not just make—

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Careful!

Mr. Stanfield: —gestures in the House, as my hon. friends are doing.

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Madam Speaker, when I made a few interjections during the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) he invited me to say a few words. I said I would be glad to.

An hon. Member: By way of apology?

Mr. Benjamin: No, they are not by way of apology in any way, shape or form. I find it difficult to accept the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition about selecting or picking of judges, or selecting lieutenant governors. I remind the Leader of the Opposition, and all other members, that the ones we are selecting are already paid \$19,000, \$20,000, \$35,000 or \$45,000 a year. If we are going to have restraint it would seem to me that the people earning that kind of income should be the first ones to exercise it. They should be the ones we should select first for restraint. I do not intend to be party to raising the incomes of 100 people, 200 people, or even ten people, from \$45,000 to \$60,000 a year. I suggest that you do pick first on people in such categories—you start with them if you want to bring in restraint.

I do not think any of my colleagues in this House want, any more than I do, to face a \$9,000, or \$11,000 or \$12,000 a year steelworker in Regina, or a \$122 a month old age pensioner, and ask him to show restraint and not accept a larger increase than the government is suggesting, assuming he will be offered an increase. You cannot have it both ways, Madam Speaker. The hon. member for Winnipeg

[Mr. Benjamin.]

North Centre (Mr. Knowles) is not going through some sort of empty exercise. He has voted for restraint a number of times, more often than I have, and more often, I suspect, than any other member. He has shown leadership and set an example.

Surely it is up to members of parliament, judges, lieutenant governors and others in a similar position to set the example and lead the way when the country is in economic difficulty. Surely that is the issue. This has nothing to do with taking it out on judges or lieutenant governors, or even members of parliament. Surely the process of restraint must start somewhere. If you are going to pick on anybody, if you want to limit anybody's income, you should pick on the people who can most afford it. Surely that is where the error of our ways lies. We made a mistake in bringing in Bill C-44, and we are making another one with Bill C-47.

You do not really expect the small businessman, the wage earner or the old age pensioner to pay very much attention to us, to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner), or to anybody else in the months ahead when we run around talking about restraint and protecting and preserving our economy and our position, costs, and prices in the international market.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

AGRICULTURE—FERTILIZER—JUSTIFICATION OF PRICE INCREASES

Mr. John Wise (Elgin): Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to participate in the adjournment debate on the matter of inaction on the part of the government to provide a satisfactory answer, or even any explanation as to the drastically increased prices of fertilizer. My colleagues, the hon. member for Malpeque (Mr. MacLean) and the hon. member for Perth-Wilmot (Mr. Jarvis), over the past two weeks have raised questions on the subject, but no reasonable explanation has yet been given.

The minister, when addressing the Canadian Fertilizer Institute in Ottawa on March 6, 1975, took a hard line when levelling certain warnings in the direction of the industry and its activities.

● (2200)

When questioned in the House by the hon. member for Perth-Wilmot the following day, March 7, the minister indicated that he would not be making a statement on the matter, but made some reference to the facts and figures prepared by the efficiency experts in the department. He also expressed concern about the future of food production if fertilizer were not cheaply available.